

SONNETS ETC

AND

HOW TO WRITE THEM

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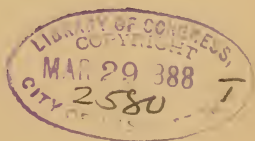


SONNETS,

ROUNDELS, MADRIGALS, ETC.,

BY

✓
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PHILADELPHIA:

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J. D. VINTON, M. D.,
1888.

TO
WM. F. DECKER, SR.,
IN
FRIENDSHIP.

SONNETS.

A SUNSET IN THE FOREST.

A BRIGHT spring day has flown. The warming rays
Which all day long have played upon the fields
Where once more Nature in her kindness wields
Her magic wand, are passing from my gaze.

From the outskirting trees the echoing lays
Of evening song-birds now the forest yields,
And sun-lit tree-tops, like broad flashing shields,
Wave in the breeze that with them softly plays.

How pleasantly the distant brook lifts up
Its voice to bid the sun a brief good by!

But gathering stillness round me seems to reign,
As if tired man from some somnific cup
Had drunk, and sleeps, while in the darkness I,
Lost in reflection, all alone remain.

THE SONG OF SPRING.

I HEAR the song of Spring, a song as grand
As any heard the dreaming sea beside,
When its incoming, restless, ceaseless tide,
With rhythmic swell, o'erflows the shifting sand
Of outline shores. See Spring sweep o'er the land
In every breeze that stirs, in clouds that ride
The heavens' unwonted blue, in show'rs that stride
The broad earth o'er, moved by some giant hand!
I hear her voice—at least, methinks I hear—
Attune with Pales in her shepherd song;
With Flora in her flowery lays; with clear,
Sweet voiced Feronia of the woody dell;
With grand Pomona, last of all the throng
To welcome Spring, queen without parallel!

MAN.

NOBLEST of all Creation's works, O man!

 Thee I behold in tenement of clay

 Dwelling not long in a mysterious way,

Fulfilling, by thy presence, the great plan

Of planned existence, which at first began

 In broad infinity, that one bright ray

 Of Light Eternal should in Time convey

Conceptions grand of its immortal van.

Thou hast not size nor shape to mortal eye,

 For what is seen is not the man. 'Tis true,

A beauteous thing appears; but it must die.

 Another something, hid away from view,

Encased within that beauteous form doth lie—

 That ray of Light Eternal gleaming through.

FIDIE.

I.

SPRING came with balmy breath. A tender blade
From earth upsprung, and leisurely unrolled
Its leaves and buds inwrought with threads of gold,
For breezes soft and vernal show'rs conveyed
A vigor to its roots, and sunlight played
With magic charms upon the light gray mold
Wherein those roots were bedded. Winter's cold,
Bleak winds were past. It blossomed, and arrayed
In royal beauty, how it charmed the eye
That gazed upon it! O enchanting sight!
The dew-drops with the sun-beams aye did vie
To kiss its blushing leaves and breathe its light
Perfume. But soon 'twas gone! It did not die,
But was transplanted, fragrant, blooming, bright!

II.

Thus FIDIE came—the fairest bloom of Spring!
And, day by day, just like the blushing flower,
Her beauties did unfold, as sun and shower
Awoke a smiling grace in every thing.
Ere long, we heard her childish accents ring,
And all the household felt her magic power.
How fairy-like she grew! How every hour,
E'en up to womanhood, new graces seemed to bring!—
So FIDIE went! Just as the plant so frail
Was sadly missed, as dawned one fated day
So she herself was missed. No whispering gale
Lisped where she went; but she had passed away.
The Master saw how she would fade—grow pale,
And so removed her from her house of clay.

MY FIFTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY.

SCARCE can I realize how fleet my days
Are passing! Lost in what concerns me now,
The rush of pressing cares no thoughts allow
For making note of time; but in a maze
Of strange bewilderment, blindly I gaze
On panoramic life, not knowing how
Its storms and chills will end, nor if I bow
Or stand as they pass by. Yet round me plays
A vision new. It checks my hurried flight.
Stations and mile-stones many have I passed,
But now one numbered Fifty-five I sight.
Ah, me! The deep'ning shadows round me cast
Foretell a setting sun, a coming night,—
That I shall find a resting place at last.

AN EARTHQUAKE.

A SUMMER night in painful stillness reigns;
Earth, like her wearied children, seeks repose;
Murmurs and strifes surcease as darkness grows,
And breathless silence broods o'er hills and plains.
The moon and stars, like vivid, blood-red stains
On Nature's dusky curtains which enclose
The sleeping world, seem smould'ring in a doze,
As if unaware of Nature's bosom pains.
Now horrid thunders, through Niagara doors,
From mountain tops to plains convulsive leap!
Now battles rage, and parked artillery roars
Rock cities, hills and seas, as, waked from sleep
'Neath Etna, Typhon shakes Sicilian shores!
Lo! frightened men mid death and ruin weep!

SILENCE.

I.

WHERE shall I go for Silence? When earth's care
In fetters strong my panting soul hath bound,
How oft I long to dwell where comes no sound!
Midway in heavenly space—is Silence there?—
No hum of worlds? No sound of stirring air?
Down in the caves and mines beneath the ground
We tread, or in deep sea, is Silence found?
Can arid desert, or broad prairie fair,
Her dwelling be? Oh, whither can I fly?
It might be sweet could I with Silence stay:
But 'neath the caves and mines the earthquakes lie;
On deserts and on prairies storm-fiends play;
For realms in space my soul must vainly sigh,
And thus my hopes like fog-mists pass away.

II.

O Silence! would I wish with thee to dwell?
Could e'er my soul, accustomed to turmoil,
To mortal sights and sounds, at sounds recoil
And leave them all? No sound of song, or bell,
Or friendly voice, or children's laugh? No swell
Of wind or sea? No flock, no herd, no toil,
No running brook, no bird, no storm, to foil
The mighty power of thy incanting spell?
O Silence! Now methinks the opening rose,
The springing grass, the bursting seed, the leaves
That clothe the tree, the softest dew that glows
In morning beams, have each a voice that grieves
At thy approach; yet from them sweetly flows
"A still small voice" which to my spirit cleaves.

LIBERTY.

NATIONS of all the earth and in all time

Thy loftiest praise have sung, and sought to gain

Immortal honors, or, at least, attain

Historic record, in the song sublime.

Though oft the effort has been but a mime,—

A form of words unwrought, a show profane

For what is not, yet, strong as is the hurricane,

Thy strength has been in every age and clime.

O Liberty! still stronger dost thou grow

When Right with Wrong in combat meets, and win

Still higher laurels in Wrong's overthrow,

Be it Oppression and its every kin,

Or Ignorance upheaved from long ago,

For Glory beams where'er thy step hath been.

SLEEP.

I.

MYSTERIOUS something—spirit, shade or what?—

Unwinged or winged, thou art on message sent

From some unseen retreat; in kindness meant

To calm the minds of fretting mortals, not

Forgetting tend'rest youth, nor yet the lot

Of hoary age, nor that where Pain hath bent

Its smartest bow, and, with sharp arrows, rent

Some bleeding heart by Hope almost forgot.

Yes, mystery thou art, mysterious Sleep!—

The fairest angel wearied man can woo,

While seeking rest, to soothe his throbbing brow,

For, faithful, thou dost faithful vigil keep;

Yet, slumb'ring, he may dream, but ne'er see who,

With gentle hand, such sweetness doth bestow.

II.

Delightful Sleep! Thou gentle, welcome guest!
When round my couch no rush of earthly care,
Nor sound discordant, fills the midnight air;
When to thine arms, unseen, I glide for rest,
With no strong passions rankling in my breast;
When to the fairy dream-land thou dost bear
My lightsome spirit and play with it there;
Or when Forgetfulness has thought suppressed:—
'Tis then, O Imitation Death! I owe
To thee the fullness of my grateful heart,
That, for a time, thine influence thus can still
Confused reflections, which so wildly grow,
While life's impassioned scenes in rudeness start,
Unchecked—save by thine own all-conquering will.

III.

O Sleep! What shall I call you? Tell me, pray!
For such a crazy thing at times you are,
That no one knows what form you next will bear.
With quiet mind I to my bed away,
But find, ere long, you lead so far astray,
That I from scaffolds fall, or fly in air,
Or drown, or struggle with some cold night-mare,
Or in ten thousand other antics play.
I toss and roll from side to side in bed;
I hide beneath the sheets to shun your eye;
But, demon-like, through quilts and sheets you fly,
Right for my stomach and my aching head.
O, crazy Sleep! If capers you must cut,
Pray cut *such* capers in some other hut!

IV.

O Somnus! Thou of Erebus the son,
And Death's own brother, whom no eye can ken,
Art called the happy king of gods and men!
Dost thou in caves Cimmerian dwell, to shun
The cries of mortals as they sink, outdone
By cares distracting, in some pathless fen?
Is thine ear soothed by murmurs soft, as when
A brook o'er pebbles creeps with laugh and fun?
Ah! drowsy god, on ebon, dark-plumed bed
Reclined! While soothing poppies crowd thy door,
And play fantastic visions round thy head,
Let Morpheus come and dreaming incense pour
On me, that I, though 'neath thy mother's shade,
May know her son with Rest my bed hath made.

V.

I'm weary, and with study almost mad,
 Inditing sonnets to thy honest praise,
 O Sleep! for worthless fall my proudest lays.
Iambics into trochees run, and sad
Hexameter, in trailing habits clad,
 Into pentameter's dominion strays.
The chain of sense so wildly with me plays;
Its links so disconnected, and my grammar bad,
That I'm distracted! It is midnight past!
The southern breezes fan my feverish brow,
Yet jingling rhymes and words discordant, cast
 Such wild emotions o'er my mind, that now,
O Sleep! thou must remove the load upon it,
Or else forego the pleasures of a sonnet.

A THUNDER-STORM.

I.

DEEP, heavy clouds come rolling up the west.
Loud roar the angry winds as onward stride
The battling hosts of heav'n, which, spreading wide,
For conquest press. Like ocean in unrest,
The surging crowd throws from its heaving breast
The white-caps of its anger. Daring glide
The serried ranks where blackest night-shades ride
Like mounted horsemen scaling Nature's crest.
Armies of old! How shields and bucklers flash!
How horridly the myriad sabers gleam!
How on the ear death-dealing steel-blades clash!
How from those heav'nly battle-fields down stream
The patriot floods, as pond'rous chariots crash!—
Ah, Homer! where is now thy Trojan dream?

II.

How sultry! 'Tis the wane of noon. The sun
Is trending for the western hills. A roar,
Like harvest wheels across a threshing-floor,
From distant regions comes. Veiled like a nun,
A cloud, in mystic robe and color dun,
Rolls up the sky. Now, stretching like the shore
Of mighty ocean;—darkly surging o'er
The heav'ns, as conqu'ring legions overrun
The mountain crags, that wizard cloud upheaves,
With glitt'ring swords and bayonets ablaze,
With wheels still rumbling 'neath autumnal sheaves
Of cannon—flashing, roaring, in a daze
Of warlike glory, till my eye perceives,
Amid spent clouds, the flag of truce upraise.

EVENING TWILIGHT.

IN royal state, into his chamber goes
The mighty god of day, attended by
His blushing queen, the idol of the sky,
Whose golden trail a dazzling radiance throws
O'er all the sunset land, ere night-shades close
The earth in darkness. Clouds that hang on high,
Like gauzy veils where sparkling diamonds lie,
At least a ten-fold brightness add to those
That thickly stud queen Twilight's starry train.
Transfixed, her rustling robes I seem to hear,
As, with her consort, through the golden gate
I see her pass. But, while my sight I strain
To catch her parting glance, a dewy tear
She drops, and bids me for Aurora wait.

.

VALOR.

I SING thy praise, O Valor! as a part
Of man's inheritance, in life bestowed
By highest Wisdom. On a dangerous road
He needs must travel, where the stoutest heart
Might yield to fear when vagrant ills upstart,
Highwayman like; but thou his weightiest load
Canst lighten, though his restless thoughts forebode
But sure destruction, heedless that thou art.
If thus frail man must war, be thou his guide;
In darkest hours his swooning courage wake;
Alway be thou a Mentor by his side;
A thorny road, with foes beset, may make
Him falter, but, O Valor, let him bide
In thee, and Honor 'll crown him for thy sake.

NATURE.

A MIGHTY power the heavens and earth proclaim :
Where'er I gaze its wonder-working laws,
Incomprehensible, the first great cause
Of all things, set my very soul aflame.
In earth, in air, in space, appears the same
O'erwhelming thought, and in its grandeur draws
My wandering mind to make a sudden pause
And ask itself from whence its being came.
Essence Divine! enthroned by wondering man,
Supreme and infinite, whose magic nod
Can sway the universe and all its clan
Of worlds—be they of fire or mist or clod,—
Who never canst grow old—who ne'er began,
Thee, some as Nature praise—I praise thee, God!

INDIAN SUMMER.

WHAT lovely days, like golden sands, between
A summer's heat and winter's cold, are strown
By Nature's hand benign! Though birds are flown,
Still, here and there, a lingering few are seen.
The frost-nipt grass hath scarce a blade of green;
The forest trees their leafy coats have thrown
Aside, and unprotected stand and moan
As in the North the winter winds convene.
Now see once more the spring-like sunbeams come,
A few short days to spend and smile farewell
To parting Summer; and, with half-made hum,
See straggling bees round sentless flower-beds dwell,
And forth crawl insects few; but soon how grum
Will winter storms sound Indian Summer's knell.

HONOR.

WHEN crushed are hopes long treasured by the soul
With ceaseless care, flushed with expectant good
In friendship, wealth and health, or aught that should
O'er coming life in cheerfulness unroll;
Or, when despair bids phantom night-shades troll
About us, which, with mental anguish, would
O'erwhelm a staggering brain, if by it stood
No friendly guard its sorrows to condole:
'Tis Honor lifts the man a man to be,
To keep the path of rectitude, although
His brother man for wealth deceives, and he,
The sport of friend pretending yet a foe,
Goes forth with trembling faith till faith can see
That Honor's shield resists the fellest blow.

THE WAYSIDE SPRING.

NEAR midway of a long and tiresome hill,
Where tall trees lift their heads and shadows cast
Across the streets in undulations vast,
There, from the wayside rocks, a trickling rill
Comes dancing forth, and onward flows, until
Its sparkling drops the wooden spout have passed,
Through fickle sunlight glimmering to the last,
As slow, but sure, the mossy trough they fill.
How oft, beside that fount when burning heat
Of summer solstice parched my fevered lip,
Have I reclined; and there, on braky brink,
With pebbly carpet white beneath my feet—
Head bent the fount above, with eager sip,
A nectar drank the gods would stoop to drink.

MORNING.

I.

ALL hail to thee, fair Morn! The eastern skies
Are heralding thy coming, and with rays
Of gold are fringing mountain tops, and bays,
And brooks, and meadows. Night in swiftness flies,
Aghast at thy bright presence. Song replies
To song from dewy tree and bush, where plays
The fragrant breeze and merry bird, and lays
From silver rills in soothing cadence rise.
The tears, Night on her path has shed, transformed
To mists ethereal, heavenward soar, in vain
Attempt the rising sun to hide; the gleams
Of day increase; the quiet bee-hive, warmed,
Resumes its hum; and, restless on his bed of pain,
The sick man gladly hails thy rising beams.

II.

As forth I walk at morning's early hour,
What incense, to my soul, comes pouring in!
On every hand, what charming sights begin
With the first breath of day! From grass and flower,
From bush and tree, refreshed by dew and shower,
What beauty springs! Where could my spirit win
A holier charm, ere in the constant din
Of daily life it needs must show its power?
The cattle on the meads; the worm that crawls
Upon the soil; the birds in bush or tree;
The fly that hails the sun; the cock that calls
A world from sleep; the tireless, busy bee;
The blushing rose from hedge or garden walls—
O Morn! all these are charms I find in thee!

FRIENDSHIP.

THE soul of man was never formed to dwell
Recluse, communing only with its own
Unsatisfying records, for a tone
Of human sympathy its joys can swell.
When wearying life presents its sickening spell
Of sadness, and the spirit doth but moan
In solitude, how soon is overblown
The cloud when Friendship strikes her silver bell.
Our deep-felt longings for a friendly voice,
Well up resistless from the soundless soul;
Nor are they feigned, nor do they come from choice,
But spring by natural birth, deigned to control
The minds of brother men while they rejoice
And in strong bands of brotherhood enroll.

I. THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

DARKNESS of night has settled o'er the plain,
And scarce distinguishable are the hills
That rise against the distant sky, and chills,
From heavy night-air, full dominion gain.
The watchful shepherds careful guard maintain
O'er sleeping flocks, as, from the limpid rills,
Soft, gurgling Murmur sings her soothing trills,
For Peace in Judah's realm has come to reign.
Lo! what new light from starry heav'ns down-flows!
What midnight songs by startled ears are heard
Amid that light which still in brightness grows!
Prostrate the shepherds fall; but flocks unstirred
Sleep on, nor heed how beams that one bright gem,
Star of the East, the Star of Bethlehem.

II. THE SONG THAT WAS SUNG.

UPON the ground the prostrate shepherds lay.

Night-mantled skies with light were beaming still
Where heav'n had oped for seraph choirs to thrill
Those shepherds' ears with wonder; and as they
Bent listening, songs celestial seemed to say:

“Glory to God on high! To men good will,
And peace on earth, for highest joy shall fill
All people, for to you is born this day,
In David's city, Christ the Lord!” The song,
As parting seraphs filled that heav'n-lit space,
Seemed fainter, fainter growing, and the throng
With brightness dazed no more the lifted face;
But though night's darkness held its fetters strong,
That one bright Star still marked the sacred place.

III. THE HEAVENLY GUIDE.

No longer prostrate lay the shepherds where
They heard the glorious song that had been sung.
Their fears were quelled, and in their minds upsprung
Communings as to how they should repair
To David's city, and while seeking there,
Mid royal foes by keenest malice stung,
Could find the place where had been born the young
Celestial visitant, king David's heir.
But midnight darkness reigned the camp around;
The flocks their care would need ere their return;
The way was drear and o'er uncertain ground;
Yet they must go; and as they go they learn
By that bright Star just where the child is found.
O heav'n-sent Star! thy beams we still discern!

IV. THE INFANT SAVIOUR FOUND.

THE shepherds prostrate lie, but not with fear,
And at an infant Saviour's feet, while flow
Their adorations, precious gifts bestow,
Of gold, frankincense, myrrh—offerings sincere,
In Oriental customs, which endear
In friendship friend to friend. Their weary road,
The traveling star, their flocks, their far abode,
In their exceeding joy, no more appear.
Oh, wondrous sight! What do their eyes behold?
Though meanly domiciled where foes abound;
Devoid of comforts as by prophets told;
No shouting crowd his praise supreme to sound;
Yet in that manger swaddling clothes enfold
A Mighty One the shepherd eyes have found.

V. THE KING TRIUMPHANT.

Now wake the glories of king David's throne,
And the magnificence of Solomon,
A mighty king, king David's royal son,
The grandest, aye, the world hath ever known.
Hence cometh song! Not shepherd ears alone
To wondrous harmonies, in heav'n begun,
Are listening now, for down the ages run
These strains melodious all the world may own :
"Lift up your heads ye everlasting gates,—
Ye doors, and let the King of glory in!"
"Who is this King of glory? Who thus waits
Without? His nation what, his tribe, his kin?"
"The Lord of hosts! The Lord who worlds creates,
From earth triumphant, now will enter in!"

DEATH.

O DEATH! Indeed, a mystery thou art!

I hear thy step without, while I'm encased

Within this shell whereon thy hand has traced
A target point, on its most vital part.

Oft have I seen go by thy trustful dart;—

I've seen within thy cheerless arms embraced

The loveliest forms by highest virtues graced,
And, too, the vilest at thy presence start.

Ah! how thy step seems ever drawing near,

As fast my days are numbered in the past!

The cords that bind me often do I hear

Thy hand undoing, and thy shadow cast
Before, will make thy presence soon appear,

And in thine arms I, too, be found at last.

THE OCEAN SHORE.

I'M standing on a stretch of ocean shore,
And view the billows rolling to and fro,
The rushing tide's unceasing ebb and flow,
The mighty breakers, that, with hideous roar,
Dash on the rocky beach and thunder o'er
The drifting sands that shift like winter snow,—
The cheating gems that back the sunbeams throw,
And glint afar on ocean's diamond floor.
Such seems this life to me!—an ocean wide
With but a narrow shore, yet stretching far,
Where I can gaze on billows and on tide
Which threatening swell, or feel the breakers jar
My trembling bark in passing them 'long side,
While Error clouds th'unchanging Polar star.

TO THE EAGLE.

THOU king of birds, and pride of mountain peak,
No danger fearing in thy dauntless flight
O'er ocean deep, or from the loftiest height;
Welcomed by grandest armies—Roman, Greek,
Or Macedonian—perching where the shriek
Of war-fiends hideous makes the bloody fight—
Thy name doth stir my heart, since, in her might,
My country dares to say that thou shalt speak
For Liberty! Hail to thee, noble bird!

Where waves her flag of blazing stars and stripes
Throughout the world, thy mighty voice is heard
Proclaiming Freedom to all races, types,
And states of men; and honored thus, ah! woe
To him who strives for Freedom's overthrow!

SPRING.

FROM southern climes the length'ning day is bringing
A balmy air, and Nature deftly dresses
That she may sport, till Summer's hand caresses
The fields rejuvenized. Now, upward springing,
The grass and flowers appear; and, sweetly singing
In blooming trees where Beauty shakes her tresses,
The flitting birds seek sheltering recesses,
Where they their nests may hang in zephyrs swinging.
The ice and snow insensibly have parted
From crystal haunts, for youthful Spring, reviving,
Comes tripping forth, and, on her new course started—
While from her presence frowning Winter driving—
Her richest treasures scatters, open-hearted,
Till fruitful earth with every good is thriving.

SUMMER.

No longer in her frozen bosom's keeping
Doth Nature hold her treasures; but o'erflowing
With new-born vigor, and warm life upgrowing,
The wakened plants forget their winter sleeping.
The living sunbeams from Sol's chariot leaping,
As up the sky its brazen wheels are glowing,
Have fructified the grain of spring-time sowing,
And promised harvests for the autumn reaping.
It now is Summer. Lo! what beauty passes
As days go fleeting by! and while thus fleeting,
How rapidly Time shifts his endless classes
Of scenes earth-born, and them each year repeating,
Brings varying fruits and flowers and leaves and
grasses,
And thus is man to noble deeds entreating.

AUTUMN.

How mild the sun! How soft the moonbeams falling!
Among the yellow leaves in forests dropping,
The autumn birds to merry songs are hopping,
And to their mates premonitory calling.
The insects, seen at mid-day slowly crawling,
Are warming in the sun, but not long stopping,
Retire; and the last lingering flower outcropping,
The sunny hedge is gracefully installing.
Now, far and near, the shocks of corn are standing
In sheltered valleys and on hillsides, waiting
Awhile their golden ears grow still more golden:
And, too, the trees, with blushing fruits expanding,
Forecast the thoughts to scenes most animating,
When winter evenings come with customs olden.

WINTER.

Down mountain sides and up through valleys sighing,
The winds are moving now, and low is sinking
The sun to southern spheres, and, coldly blinking,
The stars look down on Nature prostrate lying.
The rifted clouds across the sky are flying;
The laughing waters, from the frost-bite shrinking,
Have drawn their glassy shutters, as if thinking
To shut out thus the scene of Nature dying.
But Winter has her time to reign. Commotion
Assumes its active part; and now its fretting
And painful din serves Winter's angry notion,
And through the air down on the earth is letting
The snow-clouds fall, like an o'erwhelming ocean,
While raging storms are 'Time's behest abetting.

A SNOW-STORM.

THE frosty wind has from its ice-caves come,
And the broad land is shrinking at its breath,
Nor listens aught to hear its music grum
In nooks and corners—requiems of death.
A leaden sky has canopied the earth
All through the morning hours, and but faint light
The day now sheds upon the seeming dearth
Of active life, as if itself were night.
Ere mid-day, from that strange o'erhanging cloud,
So dense, so black, the light-winged, feathery flakes
The frozen, lifeless, somber earth enshroud
For dreamless sleep; and in its wrath awakes
The howling wind its own death-song to sing,
Ere Winter flies as swells the voice of Spring.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

WHEN in the fields alone, at summer eve,
I wander where the whispering groves and rills
Are mingling sweetest music, and the trills
Of evening song-birds swell as day-beams leave;
When near the sea I stand where gently heave
The foam-tipt waters, where my spirit fills
With inspiration and with grandeur thrills
At its pulsations which my thoughts inweave:—
I feel thy words, O Poet! ever breathe
A music sweet as any heard in field
Or brook or sea; and what thou didst bequeath
To man, immortal must remain, unsealed
By pedant strains—a bright poetic wreath
For all who glean the fruits thy labors yield.

TO MILTON.

THERE is a beauty in a twinkling star
Enjeweling a clear autumnal sky;
A pleasantness in meteors when they fly
Like glowing sparks from reckless Phaeton's car;
A loveliness in Luna, who, from far,
With gentle radiance greets the wakeful eye;
A soothing mildness in the golden dye
Of twilight skies no shadows ever mar:—
But thou, O Milton! like the brighter sun,
Outshining all with thy majestic light
Of towering reason, art surpassed by none
Who e'er in human thought attempted flight;
And, as in reach thy skill has thus outdone
All others, thou hast gained a monarch's right.

SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY.

I.

I WOULD not scorn opinion, nor would I
My brother's right to thought in value make
Inferior to my own, nor for his sake
Yield him my rights himself to gratify.
Man has not yet proved what we deify—
A man perfection—for the oft mistake
His grandest theories so oft doth shake,
That wisest sages seem but born to lie.
The more they speculative regions tread—
Those fields in miscalled Reason's kingdom laid—
More deeply mired are they; for, blindly led
By faulty predilections, and arrayed
In crude opinions, each assumes the head
Of Progress, though they merely retrograde.

II.

Why should my brother think my only end
Is to assent to his dogmatic views,
Forgetting how his eagerness eschews
As false in me what others may commend?
I scorn the man who never will unbend
From self-presumed permission to abuse
Another's right, but claims that right accrues
To him whose might no other's can transcend.
In all the range of thought may speculate
The tyro or the sage; and oft may skill
Be pained to know which best can advocate
What others must believe of volatile
Philosophy, though common-sense, innate,
Is satisfied, where doubts the speculators fill.

III.

The universe, ruled by unchanging law,
Seems harmony itself. But harmony
With man's emotions can no partner be,
Since fickle man cannot his self withdraw.
He is his own best friend — self without flaw—
And though he cannot read himself, yet he
Would Nature read and all her course foresee—
As wise a sage as Science ever saw.
Though Science may be true, he, scientist,
May err. The language which true Science speaks
He oft misunderstands, although insist
Experts that they her book have read; yet peaks
Of mountain doubts uplift in seas of mist,
Where darkness still prevails, misnomered, *freaks*.

IV.

Some things there are we know; of some we guess
The meaning, reasoning if we may persuade
Our conscious spirits that an ambushade
Some foe has planned, while we are weaponless.
We wot not if to fight or acquiesce.
Still, darkest mysteries we would invade
With books of guesses, and with wrath upbraid
The unbeliever at his emptiness.
Just here we oft misstep; for, though we turn
Our reason's brightest ray upon some dark
Just apprehended point, and think to learn
Its perfect nature by the simple spark
Of mental vision, yet, though pained, discern,
Like many a sage, that we've not touched the mark.

V.

What am I that, with such a misruled gift
As Reason, I should with complacent will
Assume that I've explored some mystic rill
Which long hath sent my fellow men adrift?
It may be Science, whose grand shapes uplift,
Whereat a world may doubt, nor find the skill
To pierce the veil that holds them mysteries still,
In which may lie the matter I would sift.
Here, Reason tells me I may know a thing
"To be, or not to be;" yet, what I claim
As reason, may from others only bring
A sneer at my mistake; and thus we blame
Each other, reasonless: but though I cling,
Or they, to error, truth remains the same.

ON THE DEATH OF J. G. SAXE.

HUSHED be the sounds of gayety and mirth!

Let sorrow's tears once more in silence flow,

For now our bleeding hearts are pained to know
That one more voice no more will sing on earth.

Though in the field of song there be no dearth

Of merry hearts, yet him so long aglow—

Now gone for aye—no other can outgrow,
Though in that mind no longer song hath birth.

Alas! he now has joined that unseen train

We, too, must join, though death awhile delay;
But echoes of his voice will entertain

Our earth-bound souls with pleasing wit, and play
For our good cheer, till death the mastery gain,
And us to realms of sweeter song convey.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

SOME men there are who, when they die, are dead
To all the world, lost to the human eye
That saw them enter life, or saw them die,—
To hands that laid them in their narrow bed.
Though winds may sweetly sing or howl with dread
Their graves above; storms sweep with fury by,
Or sighing groves man's worship magnify,
Yet moody silence doth their names o'erspread.
But how the winds and woods and storms proclaim
Thy glory, sainted Poet! yea, how brooks
And birds and stretching prairies—all thy name
Revive when we behold them in thy books
As counterparts of Nature flushed with youth,
Alike in beauty, grandeur, life and truth.

CONTENTMENT.

WHY should I not be satisfied with what
Kind Providence, so clothed in mystery
To my dim eyes, vouchsafes to be my lot?
Or why dare think that I can better see?
Those lovely flowers and glossy berries seem
To hold the very essence of delight,
Awhile I view them, and still fonder dream;
But ah! those beauties only death invite!
I can not see the subtle poison run
Through those small veins that thickly permeate
That slender stalk; yet saith a friend, "No one
Partakes but death will be his certain fate."
So let me then be satisfied with what
Kind Providence vouchsafes to be my lot.

DR. J. L. BROTHERTON.

FRIEND of th'oppressed, and foe of all oppression!
Thy warfare ended, thou art laid to rest
Wrapt in thy mantle blessed Peace hath blest!
From thy broad stand we humbly make confession
That we but feebly mark that grand succession
Of brotherhood thy deeds made manifest,
Which knew no North, no South, no East, no West,
No truce with Wrong, no shielding for transgression.
Rest thou in peace! Though still thy genial heart
Be with us, beating with a charmed affection;
Though still thy words their wonted cheer impart
To downcast souls that need some kind protection;
Yet, rest in peace! And though unseen thou art,
Of thee, unchanged, shall be sweet recollection.

RONDELS.

A FRIEND.

A friend is not at all times found
When most we need one to extend
A sympathy that should surround
A friend.

Unblushing arrogance may lend
A heartless and unmeaning sound
For friendship, we misapprehend;

Yet, when we tread uncertain ground,
Bearing a load 'neath which we bend,
Then true friends' hands will never wound
A friend.

THE WELCOME RAIN.

The welcome rain doth storm or shower
Bestow on earth—on hill and plain;
Aye, while abloom, awaits the flower
The welcome rain.

The sun may scorch the ripening grain,
Hold all green things with tyrant power,
Nor heed the cry of thirsting swain;

But in a brief expectant hour,
Hope-laden clouds up-wing again,
And send to earth, from Sol's own tower,
The welcome rain.

FORMS YET UNSEEN.

I.

FORMS yet unseen come round my bed
In darkest hours of night, between
My dreams, and spirits seem of dead
Forms yet unseen.

But while awake, night's sable screen
I strive to pierce, till night has fled;—
Beyond its folds no facts I glean.

If, pressed with fear, my aching head
Feels Nature's soft hand intervene,
Then, day or night, I no more dread
Forms yet unseen.

II.

Forms yet unseen? Yes, swiftly fly
Forms o'er the fields my thought would glean,
Although elude my human eye
Forms yet unseen.

If o'er my bed in silence lean
Forms I believe are ever nigh,
How can I find out what they mean?

How long in darkness must I try
To force, with sense and sight serene,
That unrent veil, beyond which lie
Forms yet unseen?

III.

Forms yet unseen perhaps may press
 The sick man's bed, at morn or e'en,
 To calm his fears, that he may bless
 Forms yet unseen.

But oft, with sense of suffering keen,
 He bows to fate most comfortless,
 Bereft of Hope's inconstant sheen.

Through all such hours of weariness,
 Doth rest put on an iron mien,
 And turn his sad heart to address
 Forms yet unseen.

IV.

Forms yet unseen may oft perplex
A mortal, while imbued with spleen,
Who to his friends will ne'er annex
Forms yet unseen.

He cares not be they foul or clean;
He asks not what their form or sex;
Or if they line with king or queen.

But, day and night, how doth he vex
His bitter soul, to contravene
The dark conclave, as Time unchecks
Forms yet unseen.

IN MORNING BRIGHT.

(The Roman and Italic rhymes may be alternated at pleasure.)

IN morning bright, when day-beams *rush*—fly
Through fairy Twilight's daintiest *blush*;—sky;
When for the rose-beds breezes *lust*,—go,
Ere dancing forth, with smoke and *dust*,—blow,
O'er carpets soft of grassy *plush*;—ply;

When streets no longer run with *slush*;—dye;
When man can breathe as creatures *must*;—do;
When shoes no more we need to *brush*—tie
In morning bright;—

Then do my thoughts like fountains *gush*—hie
Up from the world's continued *hush*,—sigh,
And with unceasing, earnest *trust*,—glow,
All murmurs to oblivion *thrust*,—throw,
To hail the joy no sorrows *crush*—try
In morning bright.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

WHAT might have been? Ah! who the truth can tell?
Had half the world been made of tin,
Perhaps the sage could tell us just as well
What might have been.

Sly counterfeiters still might stamp and grin,
Might dicker with some money swell,
Nor deign to call their meanest acts a sin,
But boast of skill the trashiest stuff to sell,
If by it self could selfish pleasures win,
Though woe and want submerge in deepest hell
What might have been.

SINGING.

SINGING songs in strains sublime,
 Songs of some immortal's bringing,
 Is my heart—in measured time
 Singing.

From some blissful region springing,
 Down the stairs which I would climb,
 Cometh music softly ringing.

Voices? Hark! I hear them chime!
 Muses now are sweet strains flinging,
 Strains I only hear while *I'm*
 Singing.

MY PRETTY LIN.

My pretty Lin! thine eyes I see,
So brimming full of mirth and glee,
Are peering through the curtains thin,
Where morning beams the day begin
By kissing thee for them and me.

The rose may blossom on the lee;
Its blush may seem thy nearest kin;
But blushing fairer sure must be
My pretty Lin.

Then, near thy window, 'neath that tree,
Where giant branches wave for thee,
Where all night long the dews have been,
My time I'll pass, till morn within
Its blush shall send, from night to free
My pretty Lin!

WHEN FALLS THE DEW.

When falls the dew at evening tide
 On shadowy forms said to reside
 In garden, bow'r, or avenue,
 Or laugh mid leaves that bend askew,
 As pearly droplets earthward glide,

I, from my labor, turn aside,
 And in seclusion interview
 Those forms that in the darkness hide
 When falls the dew.

But, lone and restless, I abide,
 A stranger with a stranger guide,
 Dreaming of times when hither flew
 A form beloved, unchanging, true,
 For now no more doth come my bride
 When falls the dew.

THOSE LOVELY DAYS.

THOSE lovely days of long ago—
Though childhood saw them moving slow
 Down in the Past's forgetful haze—
 Have not yet ceased their pleasing lays
Upon my time-dimmed ear to throw.

When darkness pales the noon-tide glow,
 Some fairy wing my thought conveys,
In backward flight, once more to know
 Those lovely days.

Brighter than brightest pictured show,
Those scenes, like sea-tides, ebb and flow,
 And as of old my spirit plays
 Once more in childhood's dawning rays,
I ne'er forget how much I owe
 Those lovely days.

THOSE LITTLE FEET.

THOSE little feet that all day long
 Keep rhythmic step to childhood's song,
 Through winter's cold or summer's heat,
 On nursery floor or on the street,
 Seem ever playful, swift, and strong.

Although they romp where moves the throng,
 With innocence and joy replete,
 No hand shall bind with slaving thong
 Those little feet.

Yes, let them play with sounding gong;
 Be pleased with merry bells' ding-dong;
 For when night comes with sleep so sweet,
 And round them folds the snow-white sheet,
 Then, who would charge with deeds of wrong
 Those little feet?

MY DARLING BOY.

My darling boy, thou dost not know
How dark the stream of life may grow,
Nor dost thou dream of the alloy
That oft will mar thy highest joy,
While on its bosom floating so.

Though floating seemingly so slow,
Mid pleasant scenes so rare and coy,
Yet, ah! beware how thou dost go,
My darling boy.

If storms of evil round the blow,
Deep down in Truth thine anchor throw;
For when, ere long, thy childish toy
Aside shall go for man's employ,
Peace, like a sea, shall overflow
My darling boy.

HARRIET JANE.

HARRIET JANE not long since came,
A little while on earth to reign.
A household angel seemed that same
Harriet Jane.

As morning light doth brightness gain,
So, in her life, doth Beauty's flame
Still brighter burn as passions wane.

Though many wear the blush of shame;
Are filled with sin and actions vain;
Yet not a voice can ever blame
Harriet Jane.

EYES.

I.

THOSE charming eyes are bright and ever fair,
Possessed by one I so much prize;
Nor could but angel for her jewels wear
Those charming eyes.

Two twinkling stars ne'er graced the azure skies,
Or blinked through clouds in midnight air,
That e'er could vie with those I idolize.

Nor would my heart, from that bewitching pair,
Protection or escape devise,
For long with Cupid have I tried to snare
Those charming eyes.

II.

Glow the stars with heavenly light;
 Long I've seen them doing so;
 So the eyes of maidens, bright,
 Glow.

Varying rays may come and go,
 Bright in daylight, or at night
 Mellow as a star can show.

Stars are pearly, red or white;
 Eyes as varied. Justly, though,
 Hazel, black and blue, by right,
 Glow.

WHEN I AM GONE.

WHEN I am gone the busy throng
Of people, will be moving on;
Nor will in Nature aught go wrong
When I am gone.

The love for conquests to be won;
The road to fame that seems so long;
The gaudy show that marks the ton;
The jocund laugh and merry song;
The pride of dress so many don,—
Will then, as now, be just as strong
When I am gone.

THE COAT I USED TO WEAR.

THE coat I used to wear with so much pride,
 Now hanging stretched upon the rocking-chair,
 Shows what rough scenes so long have sorely tried
 The coat I used to wear.

It looks so "seedy" now, with rip and tear,
 With elbows out and pockets gone beside,—
 It must have had most miserable care.

It can't be sewed, nor can its threads be dyed,
 Nor can I well its goodly friendship spare,
 Yet soon the dirty rag-man's bag must hide
 The coat I used to wear.

FAITH.

To climb the hill is what we all must do,
Where no safe path can lead us round or through
Obstructions which surpass our human skill
To separate, (like good from seeming ill,)
Alike besetting Gentile and the Jew.

Indeed, the danger may seem bold and new
That rises in our path, uprising still;
Yet, through it all, a way we try to hew
To climb the hill.

These hills of toil hedge in life's avenue,
Obstruct man's path with fears that may be true,
Weigh down his heart with sin's terrific chill
Inclined to yield to no herculean will,
Yet Faith oft lends an unexpected clue
To climb the hill.

FLIES.

How flies will swarm when summer heat oppresses

The poor sick man as on his bed he lies,

Tho' oft the guard with "pooh" and "shoo" addresses

The flies.

They buzz and sing, but find—with myriad eyes—

The tenderest spots the human frame possesses,

And, toothless, bite without regard to size.

With whisks and brooms and blushing maidens' tresses

They seem to play; nor need we feel surprise,

For no distress of ours, it seems, distresses

The flies.

SHE SLEEPS.

SHE sleeps! Her beauty still is there!
How through the window softly creeps,
Unseen, the breeze flower-scented, where
She sleeps!

The hand of Death so often reaps
Such flowers we know not how to spare,
That now my heart unconscious weeps.

But see! those lips life's blossoms wear!
Up to those cheeks youth's blood still leaps!
Ah, yes! she breathes that fragrant air—
She sleeps!

MISCELLANEOUS.

MADRIGAL.

TO ELLEN.

The chilling winds may blow;
The winters come and summers go;
The earth put on her robe of snow;
The summer birds neglect to sing;
The ground forget 'twas ever Spring,
And chiller winds still blow:

But, in thy love, I know,
No winters come, no summers go;
Upon it falls no robe of snow;
Unceasingly the song-birds sing;
Within my heart is endless Spring,
For thou art true, I know!

MADRIGAL.

My pretty maid, thy love they say,
Though beaming forth so constant now,
Is like the changing shades that play
So fitful round thy sunny brow.

Shall it be so—as they have said?
Ah! shades may play as they have played,
May come and go, be dark with dread,
But changeless is my pretty maid.

I do not care what they may say,
E'en calling thee inconstant now,
For, like the shades that round thee play,
They cannot harm thy sunny brow.

MADRIGAL.

BRIGHTER than the stars that shine,
Brighter than the morning sun,
Shines thine eye, as seen by mine,
With its beauty to be won;

And not like a sun that sets,
Stars that fade when shines the sun,
Vanished from a heart that frets,
From a heart by woe undone,

For what light would ever shine,
Did thine eye, a constant sun,
Beam upon this heart of mine,
With thy love forever won.

MADRIGAL.

SHE sat in the wide-open window,
A maiden bewitchingly fair,
Where the whispering breezes of summer
Were frolicking with her dark hair;
Where the gathering shadows of evening,
Half hiding her beauties from sight,
Still left her bright eyes ever seeming
The gems of the bright starry night.

Still lingered she at the window;
Still gazed she out into the night;
Still gazed she—and all the while dreaming
Of the dear one she dreamed was in sight:
Still gathered the shadows of evening;
Still tossed in the breezes her hair,
Till other than breezes of summer
Was whispering the maiden so fair.

EPIGRAM.

JOHN:—Now, my dear, pray stand up straight!
Don't bend as if your back were weak!
You couldn't pass through a churchyard gate,
Though angel-like and heavenly meek.

*Dear:—*John, now why insult your wife
For dressing as is now the fashion,
When Lady Russell, dressed to life,
Sets your proud heart all in a passion?

*John:—*Then, my dear, if dressed to life
Is being dressed like Lady Russ'll,
By all means let my pretty wife
Another foot add to *her* bustle!

EPIGRAM.

FROM THE SPANISH BY D. MANUEL DE SEQUEIRA
Y ARANGO.

COMO suele en viva llama
Pronto arder la Mariposa;
Así la vista curiosa
Se quema en un epígrama:
Y si es el estilo terso,
Claro y lleno de alusiones,
Pueden bien cuatro renglones
Incendiar el Universo.

(Translation.)

JUST as is wont in vivid flame
Quickly to burn the butterfly,
So like it doth the curious eye
Itself burn in an epigram:
And if it be in fashion terse,
Be clear and full of sharp designs,
It only needs four simple lines
To set on fire the universe.

LA RENONCULE ET L'ŒILLET.

FROM THE FRENCH BY BÉRANGER.

LA renoncule, un jour, dans un bosquet,
Avec l'œillet se trouva réunie:
Elle eut le lendemain le parfum de l'œillet . . .
On ne peut que gagner en bonne compagnie.

(Translation.)

THE RANUNCULUS AND PINK.

The ranunculus once, as in thicket it lay,
Of the pink was found a companion to be;
She had the perfume of the pink the next day—
So we only gain when in good company.

AMOR É DA PER TUTTO.

FROM THE ITALIAN BY PETRARCH.

SOLO e pensoso i più deserti campi
Vo misurando a passi tardi e lenti,
E gli occhi porto per fuggire intenti,
Dove vestigio uman l' arena stampi.
Altro schermo non trovo, che mi scampi
Dal manifesto accorger de le genti:
Perchè ne gli atti d' allegrezza spenti,
Di fuor si legge, com' io dentro avvampi.
Si ch'io credo omai, che monti e piagge,
E fiumi e selve sappian di che tempre
Sia la mia vita, ch' è celata altrui.
Ma pur sì aspre vie, nè sì selvagge
Cercar non so, che amor non venga sempre,
Ragionando con meco, ed io con lui.

LOVE IS EVERYWHERE.

(Translation.)

ALONE and thoughtful, fields in wildness growing,
With slow and measured steps I'm sadly treading,
And turn my eyes from scenes around me spreading
Where human footsteps tell-tale sands are showing.
No other way I find—my sadness knowing—
To shun the public gaze my heart is dreading,
Or feel the warmth once cheerfulness was shedding
Within my soul from embers faintly glowing.
Full well I understand how groves and rivers,
How plains and mountains, know that I am hiding
From others' sight scenes sad to me and trying;
Yet, though in these rough paths my being shivers,
There's no escape, for here is Love abiding—
He whisp'ring me and I to him replying.

BELLEZZA DI LAURA.

FROM THE ITALIAN BY PETRARCH.

IN qual parte del Ciel, in quale idea,
Era l' esempio, onde natura tolse,
Quel bel viso leggiadro, in che ella volse,
Monstrar quaggiù, quanto lassù potea?
Qual ninfa in fonti, in selve mai qual Dea,
Chiòme d'oro sì fino all' aura sciolse?
Quando un cor tante in se virtù accolse?
Benchè la somma è di mia morte rea.
Per divina bellezza indarno mira,
Chi gli occhi di costei giammai non vide
Come soavemente ella gli gira.
Non sa come amor sana e come ancide
Chi non sa come dolce ella sospira,
E come dolce parla, e dolce ride,

LAURA'S BEAUTY.

(Translation.)

IN what part heaven, in what idea inlying,
Was pattern found which Nature took when bringing
That fair face forth with radiant beauties springing,
And thus on earth her heavenly skill applying?
What fountain nymph or forest goddess shying,
Such golden tresses to the breeze is flinging?
What heart has round it such rare virtues clinging?
Though for the chiefest I am sadly dying.
Vain doth he look, for heavenly beauty seeking,
Who ne'er hath seen her radiant eyes abounding
In love-lit glances for some fond heart's piquing.
Nor doth he know Love's healing or his wounding
Who ne'er hath listened to her sweet sighs speaking
In words most charming from her sweet lips sounding.

BEAUTÉ.

FROM THE FRENCH BY MME. ANAIS SÉGALAS.

Quoi! toujours t'admirer dans ta glace fidèle!

Tout objet gracieux a du charme à se voir:

La fleur aime le lac et l'enfant le miroir,

Dans le fleuve en passant se mire l'hirondelle.

Pourtant, songes-y bien, la femme la plus belle

N'est rien qu'un ver luisant: par un divin pouvoir,

La beauté l'illumine, et luit dans son œil noir:

Le ver devient étoile avec une étincelle!

Oh! ne prends pas d'orgueil de ce petit brillant,

Que le ciel sur ta tête a mis en souriant.

Les femmes n'ont qu'un jour; Dieu renverse leur trônes.

Ma coquette au berceau, tes grâces s'en iront;

Car la beauté ressemble à toutes les couronnes;

Un souffle en l'effleurant la fait tomber du front.

BEAUTY.

(Translation.)

What! always gazing in thy faithful glass?

All graceful forms are charmed themselves to see;

Flowers love the lake; children to mirrors flee,

And swallows gaze as they bright ripples pass.

Though fondly dreaming thus, the fairest lass

Is but a glow-worm: yet may Deity

Her beauty give, and bright her dark eye be,

And thus the worm with brightest star-beams class.

Oh! be not proud of such a dainty gem

A smiling Heaven puts in thy diadem:—

Woman has but a day, and God has frowns.

My young coquette, soon will thy graces fly,

For beauty doth resemble earthly crowns:—

One breath may blast it that it fall and die.

EPIGRAM.

FROM THE PORTUGUESE BY MANOEL MARIA.

A MORTE era huma idiota
Antes de aforismos ter,
Mas depois que ha Medicina,
Já sabe ler, e escrever.

(Translation.)

DEATH always had an idiot been,
Ere aphorisms were brought to light,
But since her deal in Medicine,
She now knows how to read and write.

EPIGRAM.

FROM THE PORTUGUESE BY MANOEL MARIA.

HUM homem rico, outro pobre
 Grave molestia prostrou.
 Qual delles morreo? O rico,
 Que mais remedios tomou.

(Translation.)

One man was rich, the other poor,
 Both grave disease had followed.
 Which of them died? The rich one who
 Most remedies had swallowed.

ADIEUX A UN RUISSEAU.

FROM THE FRENCH BY COMTE ANATOLE DE
MONTESQUIOU.

CHARMANT ruisseau, vous fuyez cet ombrage
Et ce vallon protégé par les cieux,
Comme si l'on pouvait être, ailleurs plus heureux.
Vous avez tort de quitter ce bocage
Et ces bords paisibles et purs.
Imprudent, vous courez aux cités d'ou j'arrive!
Ah! pendant vos succès futurs,
Vous regretterez cette rive
Et vos rochers déserts et vos antres obscurs.
Sans retour, onde fugitive,
On vous voit renoncer à des charmes si doux!
Je ne ferai pas comme vous.

FAREWELL TO A BROOK.

(Translation.)

O CHARMING brook, you now forsake this shade,
This valley sheltered by the heavens of blue,
As if elsewhere were happiness more true.
You err in leaving thus this woody glade,
And this fair land so peaceful and so pure.
Ingrate! you cities seek whence I have come!
Ah! in the future, with success unsure,
You will regret this loss of home,
Your desert rocks and caves obscure.
With no return, a fugitive to roam,
I see you now renounce this charming view!
But I will never do like you.

EPIGRAM.

FROM THE PORTUGUESE BY MANOEL MARIA.

HOMEM de genio impaciente,
Tendo huma dor infernal,
Pedia para matar-se
Hum veneno, ou hum punhal.
,, Não ha (lhe disse hum visinho,
Velho, que pensava bem)
Não ha punhal, nem veneno;
Mas o Medico ahi vem.

(Translation.)

A MAN of an impatient mind,
Distressed by an infernal pain,
Who now his life to end designed,
Would poison or a poniard gain.
“I have none,” to him said a friend,
An aged man, (they had been chums,)
“No poniard can nor poison lend—
But there the Doctor comes!”

EPIGRAMS.

THE BOOK CRITIC.

A SELF-STYLED judge of others deeds,
Of books his heedless neighbor reads,
At work for modicum of pelf,
Who, while he praises and condemns,
Calls worthless these and those as gems,
The same has seldom read himself.

THE POET.

How many a man boasts of his birth
As of a famous poet,
Who finds at last 'tis little worth
To be one and not know it.

EPIGRAMS.

PHILOSOPHERS.

BOLD speculators in the stocks they borrow,
Whose theories of to-day are overturned to-morrow.

MY HEART.

MY heart—an earth-bound mystery—
Is, like a watch worth many a crown,
A valued thing if kept wound up,
But far more worthless when run down.

METAPHYSICS.

A SPANLESS sea whose surface storm-winds sweep,
Without a sheltering island in it,
And those who launch upon its dangerous deep,
Will often founder in a minute.

•

EPIGRAM.

FROM THE PORTUGUESE BY MANOEL MARIA.*

A QUI jaz hum homem rico
Nesta rica sepulture:
Escapava da molestia,
Se não morresse da cura.

(Translation.)

HERE a rich man lies
In this rich sepulture:
He escaped from the disease,
Else had died of the cure.

EPIGRAM.

FROM THE PORTUGUESE BY MANOEL MARIA.

A MORTE foi sensual
Quando ainda era menina:
Co' Peccado original
Teve cópula carnal,
E pario a Medicine.

(Translation.)

DEATH has been sensual,
From early youth has been;
For she with Sin original
Has had connection carnal,
And brought forth Medicine.

L' AMOUR MATERNEL.

FROM THE FRENCH BY MILLEVOYE.

DE la bonté céleste un rayon éternel
Semble se réfléchir dans le cœur maternel;
Et la Divinité, nous offrant son image,
Sous les traits d'une mère appelle notre hommage.

(Translation.)

MATERNAL LOVE.

OF goodness celestial a ray eternal
Seems reflected in the heart maternal;
And Deity, offering to us his image,
In the guise of a mother is asking our homage.

MADRIGAL.

FROM THE PORTUGUESE BY MANOEL MARIA.

ZEFYROS, que brincais co' as tranças bellas
Da minha doce Anália,
Voai ás flores da viçosa Idalia,
Bem que na graça, e cor são menos que ellas.
Não he por vós, Favonios, que a frescura
Trazeis ao níveo scio,
E á face melindrosa, em que deliro:
He só porque receio
Que de astuto Rival, de audaz ternura
Comvosco se disfarce algum suspiro.

MADRIGAL.

(Translation.)

ZEPHYRUS, playing with the tresses fair

Of my own sweet Analia,

Go seek the flowers of ever-green Idalia,

Although they less of grace and beauty wear.

Not you, Favonius, who thy blushing dress

Dost to the snowy bosom bring,

And to the lovely face, for my delight:

It is because my fears upspring

That some shrewd Rival, with false tenderness

With you may bear my loved one from my sight.

EPITHALAMIUM.

UNITE we now two hearts in one!
One heart that's never two
Will ne'er undo
What has been here so wisely done.
But since a race has just begun,
And Love, with signal hand,
Gives the command,
Go on, glad pair, a happy one;
And since no longer two,
Be ever true
As now ye start through life to run,
Yea, one the whole way through.

MAN'S RESTLESS SPIRIT.

WHEN I look out on Nature, wonder fills
My thought that all harmoniously should move,
Save where the human passions interpose,
And that where they control such discord reigns.

The heavenly hosts, unjarred by din of wars,
Move undeflected in their paths; the earth
Revolves unchanged from age to age, and winds
And storms and earthquakes move, but change
her not.

Not so where man holds rule. His constant strife
Is for supremacy, that man with man
Be not an equal, though subdued by war.

Contentions rage unchecked the long scale down
From nation e'en to man's own heart, and he,
Unlike his mother Nature, *wars* for rest.

ROUNDEL, NO. 1.

THESE flowers will fade which, in the light
Of heaven's warm sun, now look so bright,
And toiling bees will seek in vain
To find the sweets they now contain,
When Summer passes unbedight.

The chilly wind and frosty night
Will such frail beauty put to flight,
And ere shall fall the sleety rain
These flowers will fade.

Oh, how my heart is filled with pain,
To think how soon will come again
That mournful season which will blight
These fragrant flowers that please my sight,
For though the roots alive remain,
These flowers will fade.

ROUNDEL, NO. 2.

THESE flowers will fade which, in the light
Of heaven's warm sun, now look so bright,
And tolling bees will seek, unpaid,
The sweets now in these blossoms laid,
When Summer passes unbedight.

The chilly wind and frosty night
Will such frail beauty soon invade,
And ere they vent their fullest spite,
These flowers will fade.

Oh, how my heart starts with affright,
To think how soon, with deadly blight,
That mournful season undelayed,
Against these flowers will be arrayed,
For though the roots live hid from sight,
These flowers will fade.

RONDO.

IN that remembered, pleasant day,
When we for love each other wed,
How many pleasant things were said,
Though fast those pleasures passed away.

What visions fair before us sped,
Which we pursued with feet so gay,
In that remembered, pleasant day,
When we for love each other wed.

Although those dreams have long since fled,
And much we saw gone to decay—
For we as then no longer play—

Yet still we hear young Cupid's tread
In that remembered, pleasant day,
When we for love each other wed.

AN ESSAY.

AN ESSAY ON THE SONNET, ROUNDEL AND MADRIGAL.

THE writing of sonnets has, of late years, become a much more popular occupation with poets than it was in earlier days, particularly in America. But very few of our early poets attempted this kind of writing, either from dislike for it, or for want of a better knowledge of the laws governing its construction. It has, however, become Americanized to a very great extent during the last fifteen or twenty years, and now magazines, newspapers and books are becoming deeply interested in them.

Whatever may be thought of the sonnet by the masses of the people, it is very evident that a large portion of the public mind is receiving it more and more into favor, and, no doubt, time will make it still more popular to all classes when both the people and the sonnet shall have been more thoroughly cultivated. The American citizen is generally too busy to be long enough at leisure to read through long tedious works of either prose or poetry, and only those which are

sufficiently divided up into sections that they can be read and digested during the few moments his busy life can spare will claim his attention. Long poems, particularly, will generally lack for readers unless they are of more than ordinary merit and are the work of some one of acknowledged high standing.

The sonnet is a short poem well adapted to the expression of an idea, thought or feeling, can be easily read and remembered, and would seem to just suit the restless Yankee mind. It is also well adapted for the same Yankee to use in trapping his random thought as it flashes through his mind. It does not subject him to the unpleasantness of spending the weeks, months, and perhaps years of patient, careful study required to prepare a well-matured long poem. Such being the case, a few remarks concerning these shorter species of poetry may not be uninteresting.

It is now generally conceded that the sonnet had its origin in Italy. Petrarch, Dante, Tasso, Alfieri, Monti, Marini and other Italian poets have carried it to a high state of perfection and beauty in the Italian language, and it has been transplanted into most of the other European languages.

As it is of Italian origin, it has been contended by some that the principles governing it in that language

should also govern it in every other language. But it must be remembered that all languages will not bear the same construction in every point, for each individual language has its own peculiarities which cannot be easily represented in others. Those who so persistently declare that the English sonnet should be a fac-simile of the Italian, should remember that our English language, for one instance, is not so abounding in words terminating in unaccented syllables whereby double sounding rhymes may be formed, as is the Italian. In this particular, almost universally, the English sonnet necessarily differs from the Italian, though in languages like the Spanish and Portuguese there is no difficulty in adopting this rule. I have thus far failed to find a single instance of an English sonnet that follows this Italian law, though I have tried my hand at it as may be seen by referring, in this volume, to pages 41, 42, 43, 44, 91 and 93. It would be a pleasant thing to know what a poet possessed of the accomplishments and talents of Longfellow could have done in this line. However, I believe it will not be long before some of our poets will make the attempt, for I believe this style of rhyme may be made, to a small extent, productive of very pleasing effects, even in the English language.

What is called the Legitimate Sonnet must consist of fourteen iambic lines, and, according to the Italian custom, of eleven syllables each, though the English poets have adopted but ten. The first grand division embraces the first eight lines, and the second grand division the six remaining lines. These divisions are called respectively the *Octave* and the *Sestet*. The octave is divided into two sets of four lines each, called *Quartrains*, and the sestet into two sets, called *Terzettes*. Turning now to pages 90 and 91, it will be seen that Petrarch, in the quartrain, makes lines 1, 4, 5, and 8 with one rhyme, and lines 2, 3, 6 and 7 with a second rhyme. This is the fixed Italian law for this part of the sonnet. In the sestet there are three rhyme words, and lines 9, 10 and 11 rhyme respectively with lines 12, 13 and 14. By turning to pages 92 and 93 it will be seen that in the sestet of this sonnet there are but two rhyme words, and that the lines rhyme alternately. But in the English sonnet we find almost every variety of rhyme that can be rung out of so few lines, not even excepting the octave, though the best writers confine themselves more closely to the Italian school. The Italian style is, perhaps, as capable of producing pleasing effects as any other; but sometimes a random style may better suit the poet who is unable to manage

his construction according to fixed laws. It is very apparent, however, that the farther apart the rhyme words are thrown the less effective beauty the sonnet has, for there is much that is pleasing in good rhyme.

Again, in turning to our specimens from Petrarch's sonnets it will be observed that he makes prominent pauses after the fourth, eighth and eleventh lines, according to the smaller divisions of the sonnet. This may not be considered as an absolute necessity, but it is readily seen how much prettier is the flow of sentiment, and how much easier to read are those sonnets which conform to this principle; especially will we be convinced of this fact if we compare one of this class with one that worries through the whole sonnet, from beginning to end, without a break.

These are only a few of the features of the sonnet. There are others looking to its history, its growth in our own land, and what it may yet become, which we cannot refer to here. But as Mr. Leigh Hunt, in his *Book of the Sonnet*, has condensed so much into so small compass in his directions to sonnet writers, I feel I can do no better than to present his remarks in this connection. He says:

The sonnet, then, in order to be a perfect work of art, and no compromise with a difficulty, must in the

first place be a Legitimate Sonnet after the proper Italian fashion; that is to say, with but two rhymes to the octave, and not more than three in the sestet.

Secondly, it must confine itself to one leading idea, thought, or feeling.

Thidly, it must treat this one leading idea, thought, or feeling in such a manner as to leave in the reader's mind no sense of irrelevancy or insufficiency.

Fourthly, it must not have a speck of obscurity.

Fifthly, it must not have a forced rhyme.

Sixthly, it must not have a superfluous word.

Seventhly, it must not have a word too little; that is to say, an omission of a word or words, for the sake of convenience.

Eighthly, it must not have a word out of its place.

Ninthly, it must have no very long word, or any other that tends to lessen the number of accents, and so weaken the verse.

Tenthly, its rhymes must be properly varied and contrasted, and not beat upon the same vowel,—a fault too common with very good sonnets. It must not say, for instance, *rhyme, tide, abide, crime*; or *play, gain, refrain, way*; but contrast *i* with *o*, or with some other strongly opposed vowel, and treat every vowel on the same principle.

Eleventhly, its music, throughout, must be as varied as it is suitable; more or less strong, or sweet, according to the subject; but never weak or monotonous, unless monotony itself be the effect intended.

Twelfthly, it must increase, or, at all events, not decline, in interest, to its close.

Lastly, the close must be equally impressive and unaffected; not epigrammatic, unless where the subject warrants it, or where point of that kind is desirable; but simple, conclusive, and satisfactory; strength being paramount, where such elevation is natural, otherwise on a level with the serenity; flowing in calmness, or grand in the manifestation of power withheld.

These rules of Mr. Hunt are as condensed as could be made, and those wishing to know what is before them when they undertake to write a sonnet, have here a gauge by which they can readily measure their capacity.

Many very good sonnets are written in alternate rhymes, in which case the last two lines necessarily form a couplet. Frequently we find the first four lines in the sestet rhyming alternately and the remaining two forming a couplet. Some writers make an Alexandrine line of the last and give it twelve syllables after the manner of the Spenserian stanza. Some of the earlier English poets like Spenser, Shakespeare and others, did not follow the Italian rule, but suited their own fancy as to style, which probably will be the way with the independent American poet—each one rhyming according to his or her own taste.

Sometimes we find lines arranged according to the laws of the sonnet without rhyme, and not wholly devoid of pleasing effect. If the quatrains and terzettes are distinctively marked, such poems may be read with nearly as good effect as true sonnets, for often in the sonnet the succession of rhyme-words is not so marked as in some other kinds of poetry.

The sonnet is a school for those poets addicted to writing lengthy poems. It is a good thing sometimes to put ones thoughts under restrictions in order to break up the tendency to verbosity which, in many poets, is often carried to a very unpleasant extent.

The *ROUNDEL* has not yet received the attention that the sonnet has. The roundel is better adapted to themes of a lighter character, and for music, for the rhythm, the varieties of measure and the refrains give it a more social and enlivening effect. There seem to be but few unyielding rules to be observed in its construction, yet to write one that evinces a perfectness in itself is not an easy task. But few of our poets have tried to write them, so far as I have been able to discover, and the few who have made the attempt seem to have had but little idea of any legal form for its government. It has a variety of names, such as the Italian Rondo, the French Rondeau, Rondel, Roundel,

and Roundelay, all meaning the same thing, though often differing in the styles of different writers. It evidently has much of the French hilarity about it, and is well adapted to that peculiar feature of that language, though other languages have adopted it to some extent. But as I can only speak of its construction and give some directions how to write it, I will not attempt a historical description, but enter upon my task at once.

The stereotyped definition of the roundel as given in most all works giving it a notice, is that it is "a kind of poetry, commonly consisting of thirteen verses, of which eight have one rhyme, and five another. It is divided into three couplets, and at the end of the second and third, the beginning of the roundel is repeated in an equivocal sense if possible." On page 68 will be found one of this kind. In this we notice that the refrain is made to rhyme with the second rhyme-word, though perhaps more frequently we find them written as on page 110, Roundel No. 1, where there is a different arrangement of the rhyme, and the refrain is left without a rhyme-word. I think this is much less musical than the other way; for ending a rhyming poem with a word that does not rhyme, in a production so promising of music as is the roundel,

is very abrupt and unsatisfying to the ear. On page 111, in Roundel No. 2, I have reconstructed Roundel No. 1, making the refrain rhyme with the second rhyme-word which I consider preferable.

The form adopted by Mr. Swinburne in his "Century of Roundels," consists of but nine lines, five with one rhyme, and four with another. Instead of adding the refrain to the second and third stanzas, as in the other form, he adds it to the first and third. Each stanza contains three lines, but the rhyming words are so arranged that the refrain in the first and last stanzas makes an alternate rhyme. This is a very pleasing form of the roundel, and in some respects easier to write than the longer one as there are fewer rhymes of each kind.

In either of these forms it is not necessary that the meter should be wholly iambic, or that the lines should contain a definite number of feet, for the writer's fancy can have full play and adopt whatever arrangement will give the most pleasing effect to his ideas. One very important matter to be observed, however, is that the refrain line shall make, as nearly as possible, a part of the line which it follows, both in sense and grammatical connection, since it should not be considered as a line of itself.

Another form of the roundel may be found on page 112, in which two full lines are made to act as the refrain. It may often be desirable to vary from this form, either in number of lines and syllables, or in the arrangement of rhymes. But the very important matter of effect and perfectness should never be overlooked. Neither should the advice given in the tenth rule for the sonnet by Mr. Hunt, on page 120, be forgotten. The roundel on page 73 is a violation of this rule, for *came* and *reign* have too close a resemblance in the vowel *a* sound to be pleasing to the ear.

The MADRIGAL is more particularly devoted to amorous subject, as may be observed in Petrarch and others who have made use of it. In regard to its form, much that has been said of the roundel will apply to the madrigal. The general directions given are that it must contain not less than four, nor more than sixteen lines; Petrarch confines himself to about eight. It is said that some of Tasso's madrigals are the finest specimens of poetry in the Italian language. The subjects being of a delicate and tender nature, if the poem be well conceived and tersely expressed, it would very naturally have a tendency to captivate the reader's attention. The madrigal need not always be expressive of disappointments and vexations, for the playfulness

of the passions gives ample scope for some of the finest expressions a reader could wish. The length of the lines and the rhymes of the madrigal may assume almost any form to suit the poet's notion. There is no such distinctive characteristic to mark the form of the madrigal as is found in the refrain to mark the roundel, and what might be called a madrigal may often be called by some other name.

The SESTINA is another species of poem which bears very distinctive marks of its character, insomuch that it is quite unlike anything else. It has no rhyme, but contains six stanzas of six lines each, and one of three lines. Its peculiarity lies in the use of six words to end the six lines of the first stanza, which words are to be used to end the remaining stanzas after the following manner: The last word of the last line of any stanza must be the last word of the first line of the succeeding stanza. Then the other end-words must be used according to the following order: First line, fifth line, second line, fourth line, and ending with the third line, which, in turn, becomes the end-word of the first line of the next verse. This is Petrarch's order. But in the seventh stanza of three lines the six ending words must all be introduced in the same order as in the first stanza, commencing with the first—which was

the last in the sixth—with the three alternate words standing somewhere within the lines, and the remaining three at the respective ends. I have endeavored in the following effort to illustrate the above remarks, showing how the end-words must be arranged.

SESTINA.

UNREQUITED LOVE.

How lonely now life's pathway do I find!
And how unpleasant to my weary feet,
Since unrequited is the love my heart
So long hath poured, in most devoted strains,
For a fair idol which doth fill my dreams,
And ne'er is absent from my watchful eye.

Why doth a sadness so becloud my eye
That no sweet fields my weariness can find?
Why should my life be only made of dreams,
And stony paths so wound my toiling feet?
Why doth my ear not sometimes fill with strains
To start vibrations in my downcast heart?

The weighty griefs of my neglected heart
Can ne'er escape the vigils of an eye
That marks the causes for its mournful strains;
Yet, carefully, I long have sought to find
Some shadowy place where I might turn my feet,
And see if life is wholly made of dreams.

There is no pleasure in evanished dreams;
Though, while the drowsy moments steep the heart,
We seem to run with unfatiguing feet,
Till from the spell awakes the truthful eye,
Yet, sadder still becomes the heart to find
That it alone must sing its own sad strains.

Oh, wake once more those dear old cherished strains
Of tenderest love that gave me such dear dreams!
Dear heart of hearts! in thee, oh let me find
Once more that kind regard which my poor heart
So ardently returned when thy bright eye
With strongest magic brought me to thy feet!

There would I rest once more—rest at thy feet!
Though fills my soul with mem'ries of sweet strains;
Though all thy beauties still impress my eye,
Yet, how I long for something not in dreams!
Oh! let there be a yielding in thy heart,
That in thy sight I former joys may find!

'Twere sweet to find rest for my weary feet,
Where o'er my heart once stole love's cheering strains
In no sad dreams to blind a lover's eye.

I think that the exercise of a little ingenuity in the arrangement of words to rhyme would produce some very pleasing features in the sestina. Of course the trouble would be that there are so few rhyme-words, and the oft recurrence of the same rhyming sound, in

so long a poem as is the sestina, would be wearying unless very skillfully wrought out.

The OTTAVA RIMA is worthy of mention in this connection, inasmuch as it is in extensive use in the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese languages. Some of their most noted poems are written in this kind of verse, such as the *Gierusalemme Liberata* of Tasso, the *Morgante Maggiore* of Pulci, the *Orlando Innamorato* of Bojardo, the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto, in Italian; the *Araucana* of Ercilla, in Spanish, and the *Lusiados* of Camoëns, in Portuguese, etc. Byron has also employed the same stanza in his *Don Juan*. It is of Italian origin, but has been extensively borrowed by other nations. It consists of eight heroic lines, the six first having but two rhyme-words which rhyme alternately, and the last two are a couplet having a different rhyme from the other six. The following specimen from Byron's translation of Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore*, will be sufficient for an illustration. It is the invocation stanza opening the poem.

In the beginning was the Word next God ;
God was the Word, the Word was no less he :
This was in the beginning, to my mode
Of thinking, and without him naught could be :
Therefore, Just Lord ! from out thy high abode,
Benign and pious, bid an angel flee,
One only, to be my companion, who
Shall help my famous, worthy, old song through.

There are many other forms for writing poetry of which it is unnecessary for me to speak at length here. The Epigram speaks for itself. The Epithalamium, or nuptial song, may be written with as much freedom as any other poem, its peculiarity resting in the sentiment. There are Quatrains, the Spenserian stanza, Terzettes, and many others which can be easily acquired by those wishing to write them.

In closing this essay, I feel that I have embodied in these few pages much that is valuable to the majority of those who are attempting to write poetry, and which can be found nowhere else in so compact a form. I have thrown in many ideas of my own which experience has showed me to be worthy of note. It is evident that remarks so briefly made as these have been, cannot reach much that many might desire to see; but I feel that any one who will carefully study what has been said, will find all that is necessary to help to a sufficient understanding of the various kinds of poetry described, to write them if only possessed of the poetic gift.

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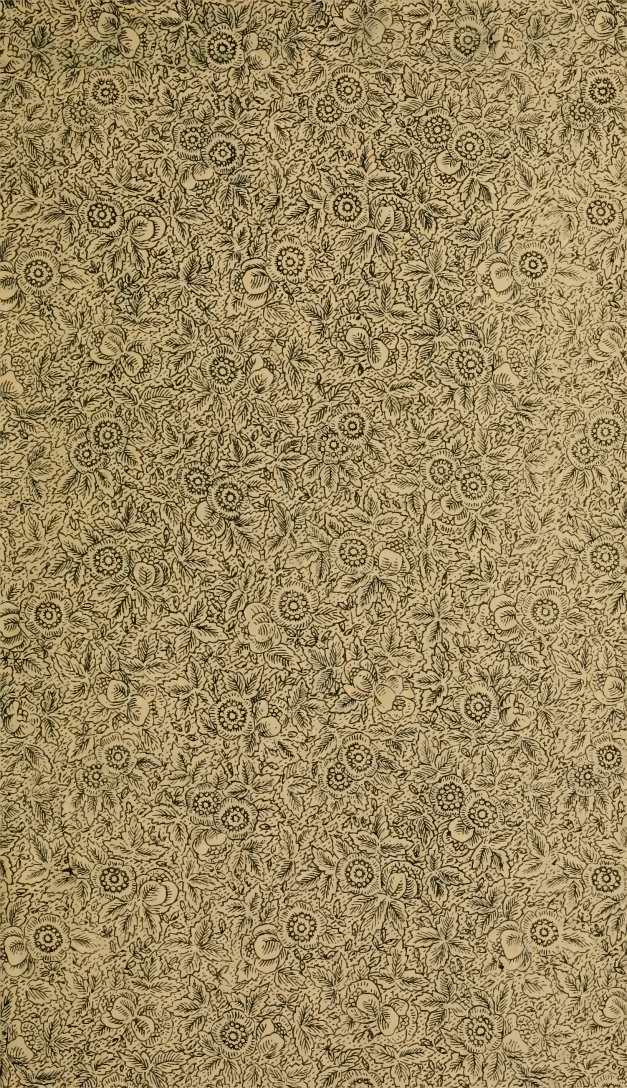
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